

I am not aware that any observations have been made any where in the United States, as to the average rate of mortality, from which a table of the expectation of human life at the various ages could be formed; except those before mentioned of the city of Philadelphia. A sensible writer has, however, intimated, that he had, for some years, been endeavouring to collect data upon which to found a calculation of the average duration of life in the southern Atlantic states, comprising Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. (a) But as it would seem the only materials which have, as yet, been collected which would be likely to afford any aid in the formation of such a table, are the few and imperfect bills of mortality which have been kept in some of the cities; (b) the reports of the surgeons of the army as to the health of the troops at the places where detachments of them have been stationed, the pension list, and the census of the Union.

The Roman census was a numbering of the people with a valuation of their fortunes; which, although said to have been made every five years, was not always taken at certain intervals; and was sometimes omitted altogether. It does not, however, appear to have been, in fact, an enumeration of all the inhabitants, but was merely a numbering and classing of the citizens of Rome, and of the colonial cities; (c) and, being commensurate with property, power, and taxation, seems to have been, in many respects, more like what, in Maryland, is called an assessment law for the valuation of real and personal property for the purpose of taxing it, than such a census as is directed to be taken by the constitution of the United States. (d) It is said that a census of the inhabitants of England was taken in the time of Henry the 8th, the returns of which have been lost. (e) In the year 1753, a bill was presented to the House of Commons proposing to have a census taken of the people of England, but was rejected. (f) Since that time, however, there have been three census taken, one in 1801, another in 1811, and a third in 1821. (g) Before the adoption of the present constitution of the United States, Congress repeatedly recommended to the several states to take measures to ascertain the number of their inhabitants; (h) with which recommendation

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(a) 2 Southern Review, 175.—(b) Seybert Stat. Ann. 49.—(c) Adams' Rom. Ant. 89, 184.—(d) Gibbon's Decl. and Fall Rom., c. 2, c. 6, and c. 17; 1 Niebuhr's Hist. Rome, 340, 347.—(e) Seybert Stat. Ann. 17.—(f) Smollet's Hist. Eng. ch. 8.—(g) Miller's His. Gr. Brit. 470, 569; Seybert Stat. Ann. 25, 28; 8 Amer. Quart. Review, 388.—(h) Journ. Cong. 26 December, 1775; 1 April, 1782; 17 February, 1783; 24 September, 1785.